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Department of Commerce · National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration · National Weather Service

***NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE INSTRUCTION 10-1003***

***MARCH 4, 2005***

***Operations and Services  
Climate Services, NWSPD 10-10***

***CLIMATE DATA SERVICES***

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**NOTICE:** This publication is available at: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/directives/>

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***SUMMARY OF REVISIONS:*** This instruction supersedes National Weather Service Instruction 10-1003, dated February 6, 2003.

This instructional document has been reorganized as follows.

- WFO customer service guidance sections have been consolidated for observational data (daily and monthly) and long terms means, extremes, and other statistics, thereby reducing redundancies.
- The detailed definitions of climate data elements were relocated to NWS Instruction 10-1004 (Climate Records).
- All references to producing the Preliminary Local Climatological Data form (F-6) were moved to NWS Instructions 10-1004 (Climate Records).
- A section was added (2.2) for a disclaimer on astronomical data (e.g. sunrise and sunset) stating such information in NWS data products is unofficial and that official astronomical data is issued by the U.S. Naval Observatory.

(signed)

February 18, 2005

Dennis H. McCarthy  
Acting Director, Office of Climate,  
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Date

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1. Introduction. This instruction describes how Weather Forecast Offices (WFO) should respond to public requests for climate data for surface in-situ sites. This includes National Weather Service (NWS) Automated Surface Observing System sites and NWS cooperative observation sites.

1.1. Climate Data Types.

- a. Observational data (daily and monthly).
- b. Long term means, extremes, and other statistics (including normals).

See NWS Instruction 10-1004 (Climate Records) for a list of climate data elements for each type.

1.2. Climate Data Categories.

- a. “Official” climate data records currently and historically published by the National Climate Data Center (NCDC) and subject to NCDC quality control.
- b. “Preliminary” climate data distributed by WFOs but has not passed to NCDC for quality control.

2. Public Availability from WFOs. WFOs may receive and respond to data requests from multiple sources (e.g. the Internet [web], e-mail, fax, telephone, hard copy [by mail or visit], etc.). Unless referral to NCDC is warranted according to section 3, WFO data availability will be subject to the following conditions:

2.1 Preliminary versus Official Climate Data. WFOs will indicate their climate data are “preliminary” with a disclaimer that will read as follows (with the hyperlink to NCDC).

“Please note this information is preliminary and subject to revision. Official and certified climate data can be accessed at the [National Climatic Data Center \(NCDC\) - www.ncdc.noaa.gov](http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov).”

This disclaimer will appear on any web page that contains climate data and be located prominently at the top of the web page.

WFOs will **not** provide official NCDC data publications by any medium since NCDC recovers its official data costs from user fees. WFOs will refer inquiries for these publications to NCDC.

- NCDC Local Climatological Data forms for observational station data.
- CLIM No. 81: Monthly Normals of Temperature, Precipitation, and Heating and Cooling Degree Days, 1971-2000.

- CLIM No. 84: Daily Normals of Temperature, Precipitation, and Heating and Cooling Degree Days, 1971-2000.
- CLIM No. 85: Divisional Normals and Standard Deviations of Temperature, Precipitation, and Heating and Cooling Degree Days, 1931-2000 (Divisions refer to state climatic divisions as defined by NESDIS). Normals periods include 1931-1960, 1941-1970, 1951-1980, 1961-1990, and 1971-2000, as well as the long-term mean for 1931-2000.

2.2 Astronomical Data. WFOs will place the following disclaimer on their climate page web pages for astronomical data:

“The U.S. Naval Observatory takes observations and generates sunrise and sunset data. The NWS is not the official custodian of records for such records and therefore, cannot certify to such facts, or authenticate such data. For information regarding sunrise and sunset tables and to obtain certified records, contact: U.S. Naval Observatory, ATTN: Code AA, 3450 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20392-5420; <http://aa.usno.navy.mil/data>.”

2.3 Observational data (daily and monthly). WFOs will provide data without cost in accordance with the following conditions.

- a. Required. WFOs will post, on their web sites, the Preliminary Local Climatological Data Report (F-6) for Local Climate Data (LCD) stations for which the Advanced Interactive Processing System (AWIPS) CLIMATE program produces Daily (CLI) and Monthly (CLM) Climatological Reports. See NWS Instruction 10-1004 (Climate Records) for details.
- b. Optional.
  - In Warning and Forecast Area. WFOs may provide access to preliminary observational data for any stations within their area of responsibility without any historical time restrictions and without restrictions on methods of distribution.
  - Outside Warning and Forecast Area. For preliminary U.S. observational data outside a WFO's area of responsibility, WFOs will limit Internet (web) access to data to the three (3) full months in the immediate past plus the current month. This time restriction does not apply to other ways of distribution (e.g. e-mail, fax, telephone, hard copy [by mail or visit], etc). The web limitations reduce the potential of conflicting information and maximize cost effectiveness of data storage. A WFO should refer users of preliminary data to other WFOs as appropriate.

2.4 Long Term Means, Extremes, and other Statistics. On the internet (web), WFOs may provide long term climate means, extremes, and other statistics only for their area of responsibility (but not the actual official NCDC publications listed in 2.1).

For other methods of conveyance (e-mail, fax, telephone, hard copy [by mail or visit], etc), WFOs may provide unofficial long term climate means, extremes, and other statistics inside or outside their area of responsibility.

3. Referral of Requests.

a. WFOs will refer requests to NCDC for the following situations:

- Any request requiring certification of data.
- Any request related to a requirement to fulfill a law, mandate, or ordinance for a federal, state, or local government authority.
- Any international climate requests.
- Any requirement for data to be used in litigation. (Note: The WFO will notify NOAA general counsel if the observer or data manager is subpoenaed).

b. For requests other than item “a,” WFOs should refer requests for the following situations to NCDC, the Regional Climate Centers (RCC), State Climatologists, or the NWS web link listing commercial weather vendors serving the U.S, as appropriate.

- When a request requires data in a format different from what is available to the WFO.
- When a request would require a WFO to expend extensive time and effort to answer.
- When the data requested requires a multi-disciplinary answer outside the scope of a WFO’s expertise.
- When data needed are historical or documentary in nature and preliminary WFO data is insufficient.

In many cases, NCDC or the RCCs may be best able to handle larger scale analysis (e.g. for drought or other widespread trends).